

The Karaghiozis Performance in Nineteenth-Century Greece

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Out of the vacuum of the sparsely developed dramatic environment of nineteenth-century Greece grew a performance totally unrelated to the largely literary and western-European oriented theatre of Athens under the influence of the king and his court. It was a performance which, unlike the literary theatre, aroused the interest of the common man through its use of folk tales, anecdotes, songs, dialects, costumes and characters as the basis of its presentation. Originating in the Turkish folk form Karagöz, the Greek performance, called Karaghiozis, found its roots in an entertainment with which Greeks both on the mainland and in other parts of the Balkans and Middle East were already familiar.

The history of Karaghiozis in Greece may have begun with the introduction of Karagöz, or Turkish shadow puppet theatre, sometime after the consolidation of the Turkish conquest of Greece in the sixteenth century, just as the Turkish conquests of Egypt, Syria, Persia, Tunisia, and Algeria in the sixteenth century resulted in the appearance at that time of Karagöz in those countries.¹ Though there are no records of the Karagöz in performance or of the appearance of the words 'Karagöz' or 'Karaghiozis' in Greece prior to the nineteenth century,² the Turkish word did occur north of Greece in Rumania during the

1. J. Landau, *Studies in the Arab Theatre and Cinema* (Philadelphia, 1956), p. 25. See also I. T. Pamboukis, *Οι πρώτες ρίζες τοῦ νεοελληνικοῦ θεάτρου σκιῶν, Εἰκονογραφημένο Ἡμερολόγιο* (Athens, 1970), i.

2. [Editors' note: This statement is based on Greek sources and does not

eighteenth century with the meaning of 'a marionette or a buffoon'. It is possible that the word itself may not have specified the Turkish performance at all, and evidence of a 'Karagöz' puppet play, reported by the Venetian Del Chiaro in 1715 and the historian Sulzer in 1780 (the latter performance in Rumanian, Greek, and Turkish) may well refer to a native Rumanian marionette performance which simply adopted the use of the Karagöz figure.³ The Greek scholar Markakis, on the other hand, makes the unsubstantiated claim that Karagöz may have entered Greece from the north through Albania at the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century,⁴ while the place of entry usually assumed in the oral tradition is Piraeus and the date is 1860. According to this tradition, Karagöz came directly from Istanbul to Athens, whence it travelled southward to the Peloponnese.⁵

A number of anecdotes in the popular tradition do, however, indicate a date earlier in the nineteenth century than 1860. One such anecdote, the source of which remains unknown, was first reported by Photos Politis⁶ and concerns Makriyannis, one of the leaders of the Greek revolution of 1821, who was supposed to have met with his captains at a Karagöz performance before the uprising, presumably using the occasion of the performance as a means of escaping the attention of Turkish authorities. As women were present and the performance had been muted in tone, Makriyannis called for the removal of the females from the audience and instructed the player to proceed with the play in a more familiar way. The anecdote suggests that Karagöz appeared in Greece before the revolution of 1821, making its appearance independently of the emancipation of the Greeks.

take into account the extensive sources in Turkish, which remain to be investigated.]

3. L. Sainéan, 'Les marionettes en Roumanie et en Turquie', *Revue des Traditions populaires*, XVI (August–September 1901), 417–19.

4. P. I. Markakis, 'Η καταγωγή τοῦ Καραγκιόζη', *Philologiki Protophronia*, II (1944), 128 n.

5. C. Whitman, 'Karaghiozes and Aristophanic Comedy', in *Aristophanes and the Comic Hero* (Cambridge, 1964), p. 282.

6. D. Loukatos, 'La tradition et la vie populaire grecque dans les représentations de "Karaghiozis"', in *Quand les marionnettes du monde se donnent la main* (Liège, 1958), p. 234; Pamboukis, op. cit., i.

The Greek critic Spiros Melas points out, however, that the anecdote may only point to an unrealistic linking in the popular mind of a national hero with a national performance which may not yet have appeared in Greece. If the meeting occurred at all, he assumes it must have been at a Karagöz performance in Istanbul,⁷ though one cannot altogether discount such a meeting inside Greece. Panayiotis Michopoulos (a player born in 1915), for example, claims that many have told him that their grandfathers had seen performances played secretly before the war in caves and monasteries; the performances dealt with troubles between the Greeks and the Turks and were attended by men, women, children and sometimes by klephts fighting in the mountains.⁸

A second anecdote, apparently originating among Greek Karaghiozis players, attributes the invention of the Karagöz form to a native Jew from the north of Greece. The story refers to Jacob, a secretary to Ali Pasha, the Albanian ruler of Epiros. Jacob, sent to Istanbul as punishment for accosting a woman of the harem, was presumed to have introduced a shadow puppet performance there, using both the serai and Ali Pasha as his subjects. Other versions of Jacob's life describe the Jew as having performed Karagöz plays at the serai for the pasha's harem and as having met his doom at the hands of the pasha either through drowning, torture, or decapitation. These versions and the fact that plays related to the life of Ali Pasha do not appear to have been performed in Istanbul⁹ place tales of the player's trip to Istanbul and his supposed invention of the puppet play in a dubious light.

The lack of specific evidence relating to the first appearance of Karagöz in Greece facilitated the general acceptance of the most popular of the apocryphal tales concerning the transmission of the form from Turkey, that of Barbayiannis Vrakhalis. Vrakhalis is generally credited with bringing the Karagöz performance from Istanbul to the Piraeus in 1860.¹⁰ The date is

7. See Sp. Melas, *Μία διασκεδαστική έρευνα: ο Καραγκιόζης, Ακρόπολις*, 11 November 1952.

8. P. Michopoulos, *Η γέννησις τοῦ θεάτρου σκιῶν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπο τοῦ Καραγκιόζη, Πέντε κωμωδίες καὶ δύο ἥρωικά* (Athens, 1972), p. 13.

9. K. Biris, *Ἑλληνικὸς ὁ Καραγκιόζης, Teatro*, no. 10 (July–August 1963), 13; idem, *Ὁ Καραγκιόζης: Ἑλληνικὸ λαϊκὸ θέατρο, Nea Estia*, LII (1952), 1128–9.

10. Whitman, op. cit., p. 282.

occasionally cited as 1864, and in one instance (Dostalova-Jenistova's German study of Greek Karaghiozis)¹¹ as 1852, the date of the first performance in Athens of which there is historical evidence.¹² There is, however, no evidence linking Vrakhalis to the 1852 performance, just as there is none which documents his arrival in Athens in 1860. Vrakhalis' role as the first 'Karaghiozis' player in Greece is thrown further into doubt by interviews held in the 1920s by the critic Giulio Caimi in which Greek players recalled the appearance of players before Vrakhalis, among them one named Yiorgis, another Ilias, and a third Andreas Agiomavritis.¹³

As Turkish Karagöz was a performance which appeared in conjunction with the celebration of the Turkish Ramadan (a month-long holiday which included rigid fasting during the sunlight hours and feasting after sunset), it was a performance with which Greeks had little contact, for the evenings of Ramadan were riotous Muslim excuses for outrageous behaviour, including rowdiness and the shooting off of cannons and guns. LeFevre in 1688, speaking of Turkish-occupied lands in general, does mention Ramadan entertainments by Greeks, Armenians, and Jews consisting of masquerades, buffoonery, and parades of tradesmen with decorated wagons.¹⁴ But in Greece itself the native population kept largely separate from the celebrations.

As for the performance of Karagöz in Greece at Ramadan, travellers to Greece are remarkably silent. Castellan in 1797 refers to illuminations and fanfares attending the holiday,¹⁵ Dodwell in 1806 to Ramadan as a time for indulgence, revelling and feasting,¹⁶ and Bartholdy in 1803 to musicians, dancers, and buffoons who danced a dramatic representation of manners and intrigues of Turkish women who escape from their husbands

11. Dostalova-Jenistova, as referred to by Whitman, op. cit., p. 282.

12. Biris, *O Karaykióçis*, 1065–8.

13. Ibid., 1068. G. Caimi, *Karaghiozi ou la comédie grecque dans l'âme du théâtre d'ombres* (Athens, 1935), p. 104 n.

14. M. LeFevre, *Théâtre de la Turquie où sont représentées les Choses les plus Remarquables, qui s'y passent aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1688), p. 321.

15. A. L. Castellan, *Lettre sur la Grèce, l'Hellespont, et Constantinople; faisant suite aux Lettres sur la Morée* (Paris, 1811), I, pp. 76–7.

16. E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour Through Greece, During the Years 1801, 1805, and 1806* (London, 1819), II, pp. 166–7.

and hold a rendezvous with their lovers.¹⁷ Pouqueville, who made his first trips to Greece from 1798 to 1801, and who was familiar with performances of Karagöz during Ramadan in Istanbul,¹⁸ does not mention having seen them in any of his travels in Greece.¹⁹ He refers to Ramadan in Tripolitza in the Morea, for example, as simply a festive period during which the mosques of the city are brilliantly lighted, the cafés full, and celebrations held at the serai.²⁰

The first reference to a puppet performance during Ramadan in Greece occurs in a travel memoir by Hobhouse, who journeyed to Epiros in October, 1809. He first makes note of it only briefly amid mention of the firing of shots, the illumination of the minarets, and the fear of the Christians who locked themselves in their homes during the noisy evenings of the holiday: 'In truth, although during this month the strictest abstinence, even from tobacco and coffee, is observed in the daytime, yet with the setting of the sun the feasting commences, and a small repast is served; then is the time for paying and receiving visits, and for the amusements of Turkey puppet-shows. . .'.²¹ Hobhouse saw one of these performances himself later in the month and referred to it specifically as a Karagöz performance:

An evening or two before our departure from Ioannina, we went to see the only advance which the Turks have made towards scenic representations. This was a puppet show, conducted by a Jew who visits this place during the Ramazan, with his card performers. The show, a sort of ombre Chinoise, was fitted up in a corner of a very dirty coffee-house, which was full of spectators, mostly young boys. The admittance,

17. J. L. S. Bartholdy, *Voyage en Grèce, fait dans les Années 1803 et 1804*, trans. A. du C. (Paris, 1807), II, pp. 85–7.

18. F. C. H. L. Pouqueville, *Voyage en Morée, à Constantinople, en Albanie, et dans plusieurs autres Parties de l'Empire ottoman, pendant les Années 1798, 1799, 1800 et 1801* (Paris, 1805), II, pp. 134–5.

19. See G. Ioannou, *Ο Καραγκιόζης* (Athens, 1971), I, pp. xix–xx (Introduction).

20. Pouqueville, op. cit., I, p. 76.

21. J. C. Hobhouse, *A Journey Through Albania, and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, to Constantinople, During the Years 1809 and 1810* (Philadelphia, 1817), I, p. 75.

was two paras for a cup of coffee, and two or three more of those small pieces of money put into a plate handed round after the performance. The hero of the piece was a kind of punch, called Cara-keus, who had, as a traveller has well expressed it, the equipage of the God of the Gardens, supported by a string from his neck. The next in dignity was a droll, called Codja-Haivat, the Sancho of Cara-keus; a man and a woman were the remaining figures except that the catastrophe of the drama was brought about by the appearance of the Devil himself in his proper person. The dialogue, which was all in Turkish, and supported in different tones by the Jew, I did not understand; it caused loud and frequent bursts of laughter from the audience; but the action which was perfectly intelligible was too horribly gross to be described. If you have ever seen the morrice-dancing in some counties of England, you may have a faint idea of it.

If the character of a nation, as had been said, can be well appreciated by a view of the amusements in which they delight, this puppet-show would place the Turks very low in the estimation of any observer. They have none, we were informed, of a more decent type.²²

Hobhouse's notice is interesting not only because it represents the earliest mention in any source of the performance of the Turkish shadow theatre in Greece, but also because it refers specifically to a Jewish performer who apparently visited Ioannina each Ramadan with his puppets. This Jew must be considered the first documented player to have performed in Greece, predating Vrakhalis by a full half century. His appearance in Hobhouse's account provides a further link with the popular account of the player Jacob and, together with Pouqueville's note that Ramadan celebrations were held at the serai, strengthens the possibility that Ali Pasha may have had a Jew performing Karagöz plays in the seraglio for the amusement of his harem. In 1822 when Ali was executed by the Turks for a revolt he led against the sultan, it would have been possible for a clever player to have integrated episodes of Ali's discredited career into his performances, and for such performances to have been tolerated by Turkish authorities disenchanted with the

22. Ibid., pp. 159–60.

rebellious Albanian ruler. Greek heroes would not have been permitted nor would plays dealing with pro-Greek sentiments; the development of a Greek form of shadow puppet theatre must thus be considered outside the province of this particular player. Finally, this notice of a player in the north of Greece as early as 1809 increases the possibility that the Makriyannis incident, in which the general was reported to have met with his captains during a Karagöz performance, could actually have occurred and confirms the hypothesis that Karagöz was first introduced to Greece by the Turks before the revolution rather than by Greeks after it.

One doubts that such Turkish performances as Hobhouse viewed in early nineteenth-century Greece travelled much farther south than Ioannina where Ali Pasha exhibited more tolerance for entertainment than generally existed elsewhere in the country. There seems little reason to believe that the Karagöz performance was widely spread in Greece, that it was performed before the revolution apart from the Ramadan celebration, or that Greeks ever formed part of the audience at the Turkish performances. As Hobhouse in his first notice of the puppet performance reports, not only was the play conducted entirely in Turkish, but far from attending the Ramadan festivities, Christians were secured in their homes out of the sight of the celebrating Turks. Neither do travellers such as Temple in 1834 or Vere in 1850 (men who, like Pouqueville, specify having knowledge of Karagöz performances from visits to Istanbul) mention having seen similar performances in Greece after the revolution,²³ although Ramadan continued to be celebrated throughout the country. Gell and Galt, moreover, document the appearance in Greece of the magic lantern—a related optical illusion entertainment—as having had the ‘greatest effect on the minds of the ignorant’²⁴ in Navarino in 1804 and as being greeted with ‘the utmost amazement’²⁵ in Athens in 1810,

23. See Aubrey Thomas de Vere, *Picturesque Sketches in Greece and Turkey* (Philadelphia, 1850), p. 313; Sir Grenville Temple, *Travels in Greece and Turkey Being the Second Part of Excursions in the Mediterranean* (London, 1836), II, pp. 218–19.

24. Sir William Gell, *Narrative of a Journey in the Morea* (London, 1823), p. 29.

25. J. Galt, *Letters from the Levant; Containing Views of the State of Society, Manners, Opinions, and Commerce in Greece and Several of the Principal Islands of the Archipelago* (London, 1813), p. 119.

responses which might not have been so pronounced had the Greeks been intimately or widely familiar with the optical illusions of shadow theatre.

Further evidence of Karagöz performances in Greece does not occur until 1841 when the Athenian newspaper *Takhypteros Phimi*, 18 August 1841, advertised a performance in Navplion. The brief announcement read. 'On the 21st of the present month there will be presented in Navplion the comedy of Karaghiozis having as antagonists Hacivat and Küçük Mehmed.'²⁶ The notice indicates that the performance, presented twenty years after the beginning of the revolution, is still a Turkish one, for the two antagonists, Hacivat and Küçük Mehmed, are themselves Turkish. Karaghiozis is not described as a figure of major importance, a situation which occurred periodically on the Turkish stage but seldom in Greek Karaghiozis.

Eleven years after the Navplion performance, *Takhypteros Phimi*, 9 February 1852, announced another performance, this time in Athens. It appears that the Turkish form still prevailed. In characteristically Muslim fashion dervishes are presented in the play; a Hacī (a Muslim who has done his pilgrimage to Mecca) acts as best man, and the well-known religious teacher and folk figure, Nasreddin Hoca, conducts the ceremony. The notice reads:

Κατὰ τὴν συνοικίαν τῆς Πλάκας ἐσυστήθη ἀνατολικὸν
Θέατρον· ἐξοδεύων δέ τις δέκα μόνον λεπτά, πέντε δηλ. διὰ τὴν
εἴσοδον καὶ ἄλλα πέντε διὰ ἓνα Ναργελέν, δύναται νὰ
διασκεδάσῃ τρεῖς δλοκλήρους ὥρας, ἐξακολουθῶν νὰ γελᾷ
ἀκαταπαύστως καθ' ὅλον αὐτὸ τὸ διάστημα. Κατὰ τὴν
τελευταίαν παράστασιν ἐωρτάσθησαν οἱ γάμοι τοῦ Καραγκιόζη,
ὅστις κατὰ τὴν φράσιν του, ἐπροθυμοποιήθη νὰ προσκαλέσῃ
διαφόρους ἀπὸ τὴν Δύσιν καὶ Ἀνατολήν, Ἄρκτον καὶ
Μεσημβρίαν, καὶ ἀπὸ ὅλα τὰ Δωδεκάνησα· ἐκεῖ λοιπὸν ἐ-βλεπέ
τις διαφόρων ἐθνῶν ἀνθρώπους μὲ ποικίλας ἐνδυμασίας οἷον
Καρούκια, Σαρίκια, Καλλάκια, Σερβέταις, Σκούφιας, Φέσια,
Μπονέταις, Πιπεριαῖς, Καπέλλα, Κασκέτα, καὶ κατὰ συνέπειαν
Τζουμπέδες, Μπινίσια, Τσακτοίρια, Μπουρνούζια, Ἀντεριά,
Ζιπούνια, Καβάδια, Γούναις, Πουτούρια, Σαλβάρια,

²⁶. *Takhypteros Phimi*, 18 August 1841, p. 525, as quoted by Biris, 'Ο Καραγκιόζης, 1066.

Γιαμπουρλούκια, Καπότα, Σουρτούκα, Μαντέλα, Ράσα κτλ. 'Ο ἴδιος ὁ Καραγκιόζης με λαχούρι σάλι εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ φέρων τὴν ἐπίσημόν του στολὴν (in fustibus) ὑπεδέχετο τοὺς προσκεκλημένους ἐπαναλαμβάνων συχνὰ «ἐπειδὴ καὶ εἰς γάμον ἐκλήθης μὴ τσάτρα πάτρα». 'Ο Ναστραδὴν Χότζας καβαλικευμένος εἰς καμήλαν ἰσταμένην μεταξὺ τεσσάρων μιναρέδων καὶ περιστοιχισμένος ἀπὸ δώδεκα Δερβίσηδες ἦτον ἐπιφορτισμένος τὴν θρησκευτικὴν τελετὴν. Κουμπάρος δὲ ἦτον ὁ Χατζὴ Ἀπτουραχμάνης, φέρων ἐπισημοτέραν τοῦ Καραγκιόζη στολὴν, καὶ κουμπαρατζίδικον καβούκιν. Εἰς τὸ ἐπόμενον φύλλον μας θέλομεν διαλάβει τὰ καθέκαστα τοῦ γάμου καὶ τὸ δοθὲν ὑποθετικὸν γεῦμα, ὅπου ὁ Καραγκιόζης ἔλεγεν εἰς τοὺς ζητούντας φαγητὰ «Κατάπινε», καὶ ἀκολουθῶς ὁ Χατζὴ Αἰβάτης ἀνέπτυξε τὸ ζήτημα ἀποδείξας ἐπὶ τῇ βάσει τῆς Στωϊκῆς φιλοσοφίας ὅτι τὰ πάντα κατορθοῦνται διὰ τῶν ιδεῶν. Διαρκούσης τῆς τελετῆς ὁ Κουτσουτζοῦκ Ἀντριας, ἀνεψιὸς τοῦ Καραγκιόζη, ἐπαίξε τὸ Κουμουζουλουπὲ Μασκαρατζικ μετὰ τὸ κύμαλον ἐπὶ τῇ βάσει τοῦ διαπασῶν μα-κάμ ἀτζιρέμ, ἢ ἤχον πρωτόβαρον κατὰ Κουτουζέλην, ἐξομοιούμενον μετὰ τὴν δυωδίαν (duetto) τῆς Νόρμας.²⁷

An oriental theatre has been formed in the neighbourhood of Plaka. By spending only ten lepta, that is five lepta for entrance and five lepta for a narghile, you can entertain yourself for three full hours of unending laughter the whole time. During the last performance a wedding was celebrated, that of Karaghiozis, who, as he puts it, was eager to invite various people from the east, west, north and south and all the Dodecanese. So, one could see there people from various

27. Ibid., 9 February 1852, p. 3. [Editors' note: The garments listed are the hellenized forms of the following words, which are Turkish unless other derivations are given: *kavuk* (wadded ceremonial turban); *sarik* (ordinary turban); *kalpak* (Astrakhan fez); *serviette* (towel [French]); *iskefe* (skullcap [a Byzantine word passed into Turkish]); *fes* (fez); *bonnet* (soft headdress without a brim [French]); *piperies* (? hat shaped like a pepper); *capello* (hat [Italian]); *caschetto* (helmet [Italian]); *cüppe* (full-sleeved and full-skirted robe); *binis*, (ceremonial riding dress); *çakşir* (trousers); *burnuz* (bournous); *entari* (loose robe); *giubbone* (tunic [Italian]); *kavad* (greatcoat [Serbian]); *guna* (fur [Slav]); *potur* (knee-breeches); *şalvar* (baggy trousers); *yağmurluk* (raincoat); *capotta* (shepherd's cape [Italian]); *sortu* (jacket [Venetian]); *mantello* (cloak [Italian]); *rasum* (cassock [Latin]).]

nations in different attire such as ceremonial and ordinary turbans, Astrakhan fezes, towels, skullcaps, fezes, bonnets, caps, and consequently full-skirted robes, ceremonial riding dress, Turkish trousers, bournouses, loose robes, tunics, greatcoats, fur cloaks, knee-breeches, baggy trousers, raincoats, shepherd's capes, jackets, cloaks, cassocks, etc. Karaghiozis himself wearing his official attire (*in fustibus*) and a lahouri shawl on his head received the guests repeating often, 'Just because you're invited to a wedding don't be silly'. Nasreddin Hoca riding on a camel standing between four minarets and surrounded by twelve dervishes was in charge of the religious ceremony. Hacı Abdürrahman was the best man, wearing even more official dress than that of Karaghiozis and in the best man's turban. In our next issue we will include the details of the wedding and the imaginary dinner given, where Karaghiozis told those who asked for food, 'Swallow it', and where Hacıvat subsequently developed the subject having proven on the basis of Stoic philosophy that everything can be achieved by means of ideas. During the ceremony Küçük Andrias, Karaghiozis' nephew, played Koumouzouloupé Maskaradzik with cymbals using the entire scale of the makam atzirem—or the initial grave tone, according to Koutouzelis—equivalent to the duet (*duetto*) of *Norma*.

Though Kostas Biris, the Greek scholar, finds in the performance notice an indication that Christian Greeks were ridiculing Nasreddin Hoca, the Hacı and the dervishes, testifying to the assertion of a native satiric freedom, the notice itself does not appear to bear out such a reading. Rather, it suggests that a strongly Turkish performance was in progress, and that while it may have introduced some Greek elements (the appearance of a koumbaros, or Greek best man, for example, and some native Greek costumes), it was heavily imbued with Turkish qualities. It refers to the performance, first of all, as 'Anatolian' (Oriental, eastern) theatre and notes the provision of the typically Turkish narghile, or water-pipe, for the convenience of the patrons. The fezes, pantaloons, and robes, the appearance of Nasreddin Hoca, the twelve dervishes, and Küçük Andrias, and the use of the Turk Hacı Abdürrahman as the best man suggest that as late as 1852, at least in Athens,

the Karaghiozis performance was still very Turkish indeed.²⁸

The gap in information between the 1809 notice and those of 1841 and 1852, as well as the shift in the geography of the Karagöz performance from north to south remain unexplained, although both may have been partially due to the opening up of communication and the facilitation of the movement of players between various parts of Greece after the revolution. The shift from the heavily Turkish north to the newly liberated independent Greek south may indicate a revival in interest among the Greeks in the form as a potentially Greek art. The revolution itself and its suppression of all things Turkish may account for the period of time that it took the performance to reassert itself.

In spite of the sparsity of historical evidence, Biris and the folklorist Dimitrios Loukatos have each attempted to reconstruct the general events leading from the introduction of Karagöz into Greece to its appearance in Athens. The performance is assumed in both reconstructions to have appeared first in north-western Greece in Epiros, the effective nerve-centre of Turkish-occupied Greece. That Karagöz circulated in the heavily Turkish-populated centres of the north for some time between the mid-sixteenth century and the revolution is considered possible, though not necessarily likely. As for Athens, it was too far south and too undeveloped for Turkish performers to have been deeply concerned with it.

Following the reconstruction, when Ali Pasha was killed in 1822 and Karagöz players in Epiros began to mock him on the screen, the figures in the performances began to be distinguished as either Greek or Turkish. The palace of the pasha and the hut of the increasingly Greek Karaghiozis are reported to have opposed each other on opposite sides of the screen from this time (a Greek innovation).²⁹ General distinctions in religion, costume, occupation, and attitude began to be made on a national basis, and new Greek characters and Greek subjects were gradually introduced, including the Macedonian heroes Alexander and Antiochos and heroic plots based on modern Greek history of the revolution. As players filtered south to the newly liberated parts of southern Greece by

28. Biris, *op. cit.*, 1066–8.

29. Loukatos, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

1830, the performance is increasingly referred to as 'Karaghiozis', the Greek term, rather than the Turkish 'Karagöz'. The 1841 notice of a performance in Navplion and that of a performance in 1852 in Athens—both of which use the Greek term—testify that 'Karaghiozis' players reached as far south as the Peloponnese and Attica by those respective dates.

The annexation of part of southern Epiros and most of Thessaly to Greece in 1881 provided an impetus to the further spread of the form into other free territories. Players began to circulate and interact with one another more fully, and the new stream began to solidify for the first time in western Greece among such players as Liakos Prevezanos, Vasilis Tsilias, Thomas Arsenios, Agamemnon Koulouris, and Harilaos Basiakos, the first two from Epiros and the last three from nearby Amvrakia and Amphilochia.³⁰ By the last two decades of the nineteenth century the performance had spread from Ioannina, the capital of Epiros in north-western Greece, to Patras, the capital of Achaia in the north-western part of the Peloponnese. There were two discernible routes (which basically conform to routes taken as late as the 1960s by modern Karaghiozis players). The first, and more significant stream, went from Ioannina to Arta, Preveza, through Akarnania, to Patras. A spur off the main stream constituted the second route; it went north to Macedonia, communicating with Ioannina through Metsovo (where influences from Epiros, Thessaly and Macedonia met), passed to Pharsala, through Thessaly, and then may have touched, though tentatively, on northern Attica. It was during this time that Greek influence on the Karaghiozis performance was most strongly felt. The vulgarity and immorality of this 'Théâtre Oriental' were censored and performers provided their Karaghiozis with a long arm as a substitute for the phallic appendage of the Turkish Karagöz figure; they further hellenized the form through the introduction of more Greek figures and texts.

A number of Greek players carried the hellenized Karaghiozis performance to the rest of the country. The established players Christos Kontos and Leonidas Goranitis were the first apostles of the new form, while Yiannis Roulias and Panayiotis Mathiopoulos became the proselytizing students of Dimitris

30. Ibid., pp. 234–5; Biris, op. cit., 1130.

Sartounis, or Mimaros, the crystallizer of the completely Greek form, in the 1890s. The period from 1890 to 1910 saw yet other players—Theodoros Theodorelos, Dimitris Levantinos, Yiannis Moros, Vasilis Agapitos—take up the hellenized performance.³¹ Roulias carried the reforms to Athens where performances of Turkish-style Karagöz had been playing at least since 1852 and had, with the landing of allied French forces in the Piraeus in April 1854, developed into a flourishing, if decadent, tradition.³² Roulias was warmly received and from 1910 to 1940 in Athens the Greek movement reached its zenith, peaking in the performances of such players as Antonis Mollas, Markos Xanthos, and Kostas Manos.

Thus from 1830 to 1880, according to Biris and Loukatos, Karaghiozis performances appear to have spread throughout the northern and central parts of Greece—Epiros, Thessaly, and Akarnania—appearing in the south by 1841 and in Athens by 1852. The spread of the form was directed at Patras, the largest city of the Peloponnese with a receptive native population as well as a sizable foreign population attracted by the facilities of the harbour. The appearance of the innovative player Mimaros there coincided with the tendency for reform which had been working its way south with the players through their contacts with the peasants in the villages where they performed. The merger of the man and the movement in Patras in 1890 made possible the formation of a completely Greek form,³³ one which met the political and religious objections of Christian Greeks to the vulgar Turkish form and which permitted the moulding of a national performance reflecting the developing spirit of a free land.

It appears certain, finally, that at whatever date and from whatever direction the Karagöz performance may have entered Greece, it was not originally an entertainment generally accessible to the native Greek population. In the first decade after the revolution, however, with the influx of foreigners and Greeks of the diaspora from all over Europe and the Middle East, the Turkish form began to be revived, no longer as a reflection of the oppressor nation, but as a popular and familiar means of expressing the newly liberated demotic spirit of the

31. Biris, *op. cit.*, 1134.

32. *Ibid.*, 1069.

33. *Ibid.*, 1132.

common people.³⁴ The numerous saints' holidays in Greece provided constant excuses for performances throughout the land, and folk performances associated with such festivals influenced Greek Karaghiozis in its adoption of klephtic ballads, demotic songs, folk tales, and Christian themes, as well as in the infusion of the spirit of Greek laic cleverness into the Turkish presentation.³⁵ As an entertainment, Turkish Karagöz was ripe for development at the hands of the Greek, for it was a spontaneous and ambulatory performance which responded to the earthy needs of its folk audiences, which was performed in a language familiar to the people, and which was based on miming and folk entertainment, traditions to which the common man was particularly responsive. As Photos Politis indicates, Karagöz in its earliest origins in Asia Minor was itself created on broad lines out of the instincts of the masses.³⁶ Thus it was a most felicitous form for the newly liberated Greeks to take up, and one which provided a ready-made medium for the expression of national characteristics and themes.

Karaghiozis provided, in the end, a viable alternative to western-oriented, middle-class literary theatre of the type that was brought into Greece by European Greeks and the nation's new German monarch. Appealing to the common man—who was alienated by foreign companies and by literary drama with its katharevousa language—Karaghiozis was an oral eastern folk art based on Turkish attitudes which had become quite familiar to the Greeks during three hundred years of occupation. It was closely tied in its inspiration and form to the very folk festivals, folk plays, dramatic dances, popular songs, fool shows, and mimes which constituted the greater part of entertainment available to the population since the post-classical era.³⁷

34. Biris, 'Ελληνικὸς δὲ Καραγκιόζης, 13–14. V. Rotas, *Καραγκιόζης-Μπέρντζες, Teatro*, no. 10 (July–August, 1963), 31.

35. Ph. Politis, 'Ὁ Καραγκιόζης, in 'Εκλογή ἀπὸ τὸ ἔργο του (Athens, 1938), II, pp. 147, 209; Rotas, op. cit., 31.

36. Politis, op. cit., pp. 147, 209.

37. A. Vogt, 'Le théâtre à Byzance et dans l'empire du iv^e au xiii^e siècle: I, Le théâtre profane', *Revue des questions historiques*, CXV (1931), 264, 284; J. N. Mavrogordato, 'Greek Drama in Crete', *JHS*, XLVIII (1928), 75–6. There is only one record (a manuscript of the thirteenth-century Palatine Passion) of a performed drama apart from mimes in Greece from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries; from 1453 to 1830 Greece had no professional class of artists apart from its dancers and mimes.

Passivity toward performed literary drama on the mainland during the Byzantine and Turkish eras left the oral forms as the major popular source of Hellenic culture, an unbroken and stubborn stream which resisted external influences from European sources. As a part of that stream, and as a Turkish-born oral form in a territory which had for so long been occupied by Turks, Karaghiozis was able to capitalize on the popular climate of nineteenth-century Greece and emerge as the art most intimately wed to the needs and feelings of the native population.

A relatively minor but tenacious dramatic form, Karaghiozis prospered among the people in a manner that live drama could not equal. Finally hellenized by the 1890s, it became what many have referred to as the most representative national dramatic art form since the plays of Aristophanes. Effacing literary theatre in its popularity until the late 1930s, Karaghiozis became a medium through which the survivals of the Greek spirit could continue to be expressed; a comic mirror of the Greek folk soul, Karaghiozis became very much rooted in the Greek soil and was perhaps as inevitable in its success as other imported forms were in their failure.

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